

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12, 13, 15-17, 19-22, 24-28, 31, 32, and 34-42 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12, 13, 15-17, 19-22, 24-28, 31, 32, and 34-42 stand rejected. Applicants have amended Claims 1, 10, 17, 27, 35, and 40, primarily in the respect that the housing and its elements (i.e., locking fingers, shoulder) form a one-piece construction to facilitate a tamper-resistant connector. Of the pending claims, Applicants have cancelled Claims 18, 21-26, 32, 34, 39, and 41-42, without prejudice. Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the present amendments and following remarks. The above amendments and following remarks are believed to be fully responsive to the Outstanding Office Action. Upon entry of these amendments and consideration of these remarks, Applicants submit that all of the pending Claims will be allowable.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102**Claim 27:**

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Clark (US 3,727,172). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that Clark discloses a housing comprising a hollow internal channel comprising a shoulder and at least one locking finger disposed within the hollow internal channel and disposed distally from the shoulder. The Office Action further states that with regard to the limitation that

the shoulder and the locking finger of the claimed invention are “integral” with the housing, “integral” does not necessarily require “monolithic” or one-piece construction.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended Claim 27 to include the limitation that the housing, the shoulder, and the locking finger form a one-piece construction. One key aspect of the present invention is that once the pin is installed within the housing, the pin cannot easily be removed, hence the characterization of the connector as a “tamper-resistant” connector. In order to remove the pin from the housing, the connector must be physically damaged or destroyed. The one-piece construction of the claimed invention enables the connector to be tamper-resistant and such a construction is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art. The connectors of the prior art, and specifically of Clark ‘172, comprise a multiple-piece construction, which thereby allows the pin to be removed from the connector. Therefore, since the connectors of the prior art are not a one piece construction, these connectors do not provide a tamper-resistant connector as does the claimed connector of the present application. Therefore, Claim 32 cannot be anticipated. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 32 be withdrawn.

Claim 32:

Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Clark et al. (US 5,820,409). Claim 32 has been cancelled without prejudice.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103**Claim 28:**

Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark in view of Eifler (US 4,406,507). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that Clark discloses the invention substantially as claimed but does not disclose eight locking fingers, that Eifler teaches six fingers, and that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the housing of Clark with eight fingers as Eifler teaches.

Claim 28 depends from Claim 27 and distinguishes over Clark in view of Eifler for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 27. Therefore, the claimed embodiment in Claim 28 is not obvious and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 28 be withdrawn.

Claim 31:

Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that Clark discloses the invention substantially as claimed but does not disclose the housing and locking finger comprising a fiber-reinforced nylon, and that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to choose a fiber-reinforced nylon material.

Claim 31 depends from Claim 27 and distinguishes over Clark for at least the reasons given above in connection with Claim 27. Therefore, the claimed embodiment in Claim 31 is not obvious and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claim 31 be withdrawn.

Claim 34:

Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. Claim 34 has been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 17, 19, and 35-41:

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 17, 19, and 35-41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. '409 in view of Clark '172. Claims 39, 41, and 42 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of the pending claims in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that with regard to the limitation that the shoulder and the locking finger of the claimed invention are “integral” with the housing, “integral” does not necessarily require “monolithic” or one-piece construction.

Accordingly, Applicants have amended each of the rejected independent claims, namely, Claims 1, 17, 35, and 40 to include the limitation that the housing, the shoulder, and the locking finger form a one-piece construction. As previously set forth, one key aspect of the present invention is that once the pin is installed within the housing, the pin cannot easily be removed, hence the characterization of the connector as a “tamper-resistant” connector. The one-piece construction of the claimed invention enables the connector to be tamper-

resistant and such a construction is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art. In order to remove the pin from the housing, the connector must be physically damaged or destroyed. The connectors of the prior art, Clark et al. '409 and Clark '172, comprise a multiple-piece construction, which thereby allows the pin to be removed from the connector. Therefore, since the connectors of the prior art are not a one piece construction, these connectors do not provide a tamper-resistant connector as does the claimed connectors of the present application. Therefore, Claims 1, 17, 35, and 40 cannot be obvious since there is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art to provide a one-piece construction that enables a tamper-resistant connector. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claims 1, 17, 35, and 40 be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 4, 7, and 9 depend from Claim 1, Claim 19 depends from Claim 17, and Claims 36-38 depend from Claim 35 and distinguish over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above in connection with the independent claims. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 2, 4, 7, 9, and 36-38 be withdrawn.

Claims 5 and 20:

Claims 5 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. in view of Clark, further in view of Eifler. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that Clark discloses the invention substantially as claimed but does not disclose eight locking fingers, that Eifler teaches six fingers,

and that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the housing of Clark with eight fingers as Eifler teaches.

Claim 5 depends from Claim 1 and Claim 20 depends from Claim 17 and distinguish over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above in connection with Claims 1 and 20, respectively. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 5 and 20 be withdrawn.

Claims 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, and 24-26:

Claims 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clark et al. in view of Clark, further in view of Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("A.A.P.A."). Claims 21-26 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections of Claims 8, 10, 12, 15, and 16 in light of the present amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action states that Clark et al. in view of Clark disclose the invention substantially but do not disclose the pin being a gas carrying pin, and that in light of A.A.P.A. it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the pin of Clark et al. with a gas carrying pin.

Claim 8 depends from Claim 1 and distinguishes over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above in connection with Claim 1. Independent Claim 10 has been amended to require to include the limitation that the housing and the locking finger form a one-piece construction. As discussed above, one key aspect of the present invention is that once the pin is installed within the housing, the pin cannot easily be removed, hence the characterization of the

connector as a "tamper-resistant" connector. The one-piece construction of the claimed invention enables the connector to be tamper-resistant and such a construction is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art. In order to remove the pin from the housing, the connector must be physically damaged or destroyed. The connectors of the prior art comprise a multiple-piece construction, which thereby allows the pin to be removed from the connector. Therefore, since the connectors of the prior art are not a one piece construction, these connectors do not provide a tamper-resistant connector as does the claimed connector of the present application. Therefore, Claim 10 cannot be obvious since there is no teaching or suggestion in the prior art to provide a one-piece construction that enables a tamper-resistant connector. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 8 and 10 be withdrawn.

Claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 depend from Claim 10 and distinguish over the cited references for at least the reasons stated above in connection with Claim 10. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 12, 13, 15, and 16 be withdrawn.

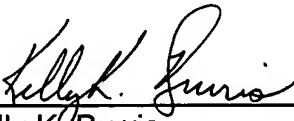
Conclusion

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for

allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (314) 726-7524.

Respectfully submitted,

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